

26 August 1985

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 21

## INTERNATIONAL

Bonn Seeks to Limit the Damage  
From Defection of a Top Official

By ROGER THURLOW

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL  
 BONN, West Germany—The West German government is scrambling to limit the political, security and diplomatic damage from a spy scandal that appears to have left the country's intelligence operations in shambles.

Bonn's vacation atmosphere abruptly changed to a climate of crisis over the weekend following the announcement by East German media that one of West Germany's top counterintelligence officials, Hans Joachim Tiedge, had fled to the East and asked for asylum. The emergency talks by government and intelligence officials this weekend concentrated on three main areas of



Hans Joachim Tiedge

—**Salvaging the intelligence system.** West German officials said Mr. Tiedge, who worked for the Constitutional Protection Office for nearly two decades, had access to nearly all top-secret information about Bonn's spy-hunting operations at home as well as its espionage activities abroad. One of the biggest concerns is protecting Bonn's spies who could be named by Mr. Tiedge.

"If he makes known all of his knowledge," said Kurt Rebmann, the country's chief federal prosecutor, "it will be an extremely grave case of treachery in the intelligence field." If that happens, government officials said it could take several years to reorganize the country's intelligence operations.

—**Assessing political responsibility.** The major question haunting intelligence officers and the government of Chancellor Helmut Kohl is how Mr. Tiedge was allowed to remain in his sensitive position despite official knowledge of his personal problems—drinking, depression and reportedly heavy debt.

The most prominent men under fire are Heribert Hellenbroich, chief of the nation's intelligence agency; Friedrich Zimmermann, interior minister; and Waldemar Schrenkenberger, a close adviser to Mr.

Kohl and the chancellery official in charge of coordinating the secret service. Chancellor Kohl himself, whose government has been plagued by scandals and criticism of mismanagement, is under pressure to quickly sort out the responsibility.

—**Shielding bilateral German relations.** The spy affair amplifies the voice of hardliners who oppose warmer inter-German relations. The Kohl government, which claims one of its greatest successes is improved relations with East Germany, will be hard pressed to insulate these carefully constructed ties from the spy fallout.

What effect the Tiedge defection will have on the intelligence capabilities of the West as a whole remains an open question. A U.S. State Department spokesman said Washington will conduct a "damage assessment" with its North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies.

West Germany fears that the affair will fuel concern that Bonn is a sieve and a likely source of leaked intelligence and technological information to the East.

Such a reputation has come from a steady stream of West German cloak-and-dagger scandals. In the post-war period, there has been at least one major spy sensation every decade and many smaller ones nearly every year. The most prominent occurred in 1974, when it was discovered that Guenther Guillaume, a close adviser to then-chancellor Willy Brandt, was an East German agent. That disclosure was one of the major factors leading to Mr. Brandt's resignation.

But the Tiedge affair is being widely referred to as the biggest spy scandal of all. The 48-year-old Tiedge was in charge of hunting down East German spies for the past several years. A heavy-set man who wore thick glasses, Mr. Tiedge had detailed knowledge of the logistics, strategy and personnel of the West German intelligence operations.

West German officials still are trying to figure out if, and for how long, Mr. Tiedge had been working for the East Germans and if there are any connections between his defection and the recent disappearances of two Bonn secretaries and an army messenger who are also thought to be in East Germany. One of the secretaries was a longtime assistant to Economics Minister Martin Bangemann, who is head of the Free Democratic Party.

Last night, the federal prosecutor's office said it had arrested another Bonn secretary on suspicion of spying. Officials wouldn't identify her, but they said she worked in the office of the president, although not directly with President Richard von Weizsaecker.

While Chancellor Kohl is taking a business-as-usual posture—he held a scheduled weekend meeting with French President Francois Mitterrand—members of his administration are working to absolve themselves of blame. Mr. Zimmermann, the interior minister, is calling for a restructuring of the counterintelligence operations and indicated some personnel changes might be made this week, perhaps after tomorrow's scheduled cabinet meeting.

However, Mr. Kohl's political opponents are taking aim. Hans-Jochen Vogel, leader of the opposition Social Democratic Party, is promising a "difficult" parliamentary debate on the affair and is demanding full disclosure before the Parliamentary Control Commission, which he chairs. Even politicians in the governing coalition, including Bavarian leader Franz Josef Strauss, are charging that the Tiedge scandal could have been prevented and are demanding explanations.